



Self Care When Experiencing Severe Gastro-intestinal Symptoms

Nausea and Vomiting

- **Clear fluids for 24 to 48 hours**, or until symptoms have stopped. This may include flat carbonated drinks (e.g. ginger ale) or apple juice, grape juice, popsicles, weak tea. Avoid products that contain caffeine.
- No dairy products or cream soups, as temporary lactose intolerance may develop
- Fluid replacement solutions are important: Pedialyte (supplied at drugstores), and Sport drinks, such as Powerade and Gatorade, are available to help prevent dehydration and electrolyte imbalance.
- When the appetite improves, start with small portions of bland, soft foods. This may be bananas, white rice, toast, apple sauce, potatoes, plain toast or crackers
- Gradually add other plain foods like soups (not creamed), white chicken etc, but no seasoned dishes.
- If symptoms re-appear after eating, go back to clear fluids or a blander diet, and smaller portions, more frequently throughout the day.

Diarrhea and abdominal cramping

- Stay on clear fluids until symptoms have stopped; avoid caffeinated products
- Start with small meals as above
- No high fiber or gas producing foods (e.g. cereal, baked beans, green beans, salads)
- No dairy products until symptoms have stopped. However, active culture yogurt may be tried at this point first.

Other Common Symptoms

- **Headache**- is common. Over the counter pain medications may be used. Follow the package directions carefully.
- **Fatigue** and weakness-is common. Stay away from work until your normal level of energy has returned. Rest is important to recovery.
- **Muscle aches and malaise** – common with fever. Anti-fever medication may be helpful (e.g. acetaminophen). Keep well hydrated with plenty of clear fluids.

How to protect your family when you are sick with gastro symptoms

- Do not prepare food for anyone else while you are symptomatic
- Wash your hands after toileting or vomiting and before contact with family members
- Wash the toilet, bathroom counters, handles, taps, first with a cleaning solution, followed by a 1:10 bleach solution two to three times a day.
- Try to isolate yourself to your own bedroom and bathroom. Do not share towels.
- Do not have visitors at home and do not visit anyone else until you have been 48 hours clear of symptoms
- See your doctor if symptoms last more than five days

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